

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 EUR-25 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 SAM-01 DRC-01 AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6718

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT ALGIERS

USINT DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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JERUSALEM OR DAMASCUS FOR SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR EG IS LE

SUBJ: PRESS TREATMENT OF MAALOT INCIDENT AND GOI
REPRISALS IN LEBANON

1. SUMMARY: IN VIEW SPECTACULAR NATURE ISRAELI AIR RAIDS ON
LEBANON, RESTRAINT IN CAIRO PRESS TREATMENT IS REMARKABLE. ALL
PAPERS GIVE STORY ONLY SECONDARY PROMINENCE AND THERE ARE
NO COMMENTARIES OR EDITORIALS ON SUBJECT. END SUMMARY.

2. ALL CAIRO DAILIES MAY 17 BANNER RESULTS OF OCTOBER PAPER
REFERENDUM, GIVING SECOND OR THIRD PROMINENCE TO ISRAELI
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REPRISALS IN LEBANON AND FM FAHMY'S STATEMENT. ALL PAPERS

HAVE PICTURES OF THREE FEDAYEEN KILLED AT MAALOT, BUT FEATURED PHOTO IS OF SADAT RECEIVING ARAFAT AT MIT ABUL KOM. COMMENTATORS IGNORE PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS: ALI AMIN'S FRIDAY COLUMN IN AHRAM DEALS SOLELY WITH DOMESTIC ISSUES AND MUSA SABRI HAS LONG ARTICLE ATTACKING QADHAIFI (SEPTEL).

3. THE THREE WIDELY READ ARABIC LANGUAGE DAILIES FRONT PAGE LATEST DETAILS OF MAALOT ATTACK. GUMHURIYYA, CITING "NEWS AGENCIES, TEL AVIV", QUOTES FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL AS SAYING "ISRAELI AUTHORITIES DECEIVED ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR AND ME AND TRIED TO EXPLOIT US TO GAIN TIME, THOUGH THEY WERE AT ALL TIMES BENT ON ATTACKING THE THREE FEDAYEEN."

4. DRAWING ON NEWS AGENCIES' REPORTS FROM TEL AVIV AND BEIRUT, PAPERS REPORT ISRAELI AIR RAIDS ON LEBANESE CIVILIAN TARGETS. ADJECTIVES ARE SPARSE. ATTACKS ARE CALLED "SAVAGE" AND "SEVERE" IN ALL ACCOUNTS. GUMHURIYYA REFERS TO "DEFENSELESS" REFUGEE CAMPS.

5. PAPERS FRONT PAGE FM FAHMY'S STATEMENT MAY 16 THAT ISRAELI AGGRESSION AGAINST CIVILIAN TARGETS "CONSTITUTES SERIOUS ESCALATION OF TENSION..." FM CONDEMNED ISRAELI "JUSTIFICATIONS", ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF LEBANESE FM'S DECLARATION THAT NO ATTACKS WERE LAUNCHED ON ISRAEL FROM LEBANON. "EGYPT REITERATES STRONGLY THAT SUCH BLIND AGGRESSIVE ACTS WILL HAVE GRAVEST CONSEQUENCES OF WHICH ISRAEL MUST BE AWARE, FOR ARAB NATION WILL NOT STAND IDLY BY IN FACE OF SUCH TERRORISM AND RECKLESSNESS..."

6. PRESS ALSO CARRIES PRESIDENT NIXON'S MESSAGE TO PM MEIR DESCRIBING MAALOT AS "MEANINGLESS ACT OF TERRORISM" AND ASSERTING OPERATION WILL NOT AFFECT U.S. EFFORTS BRING ABOUT PEACE IN ME.

7. THERE IS NO COMMENTARY OR EDITORIAL ON ISRAELI REPRISALS. ALI HAMDI AL-GAMMAL IN AHRAM HAS SHORT COLUMN CONDEMNING BRITISH JOURNALISTS' TREATMENT OF MAALOT, RECALLING THEY WERE NOT ANGERED TO SAME DEGREE BY SUCH INCIDENTS AS SHOOTING DOWN OF LIBYAN AIRCRAFT, DEIR YASIN, ET AL. HE COMPARES THIS WITH CONFERENCE HELD BY U.S. NEWSMEN "A FEW DAYS AGO" WHEN LATTER "CONFESSED THEIR BLIND BIAS TOWARD ISRAEL."

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8. COMMENT: IN VIEW SPECTACULAR NATURE OF ISRAELI AIR RAIDS THROUGHOUT LEBANON, WE ARE STRUCK BY CONTINUING RESTRAINT OF EGYPTIAN PRESS PLAY. LACK OF EDITORIAL CONDEMNATION IS EXTRA-ORDINARY, AND SHOULD NOT RPT NOT BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN ANY DIMINUTION OF SYMPATHY FOR PALESTINIAN CAUSE IN THE ABSTRACT. SYMPATHY FOR AIR RAID VICTIMS IS PROFOUND IN CAIRO. AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY STRESSED, EGYPTIANS MAY PRIVATELY CONDEMN PALESTINIAN

BRUTALITY BUT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK TO JUSTIFY IT BY PLACING
BLAME SQUARELY ON ZIONISM AND RECALLING SUCH INCIDENTS OF
ISRAELI "SAVAGERY" AS DEIR YASIN.
EILTS

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